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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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Dear Southernites and Friends!

Yesterday, I arrived in Washington, DC for the 70th Annual DC Mardi Gras, not to be confused with our Washington, DC Chapter Mardi Gras Gala scheduled next month in Bethesda. Marian and I attended King Todd Graves' Masquerade Ball at the Andrew Mellon Auditorium, which was fabulous. Many are saying it was the best masquerade ball ever at the DC Mardi Gras. As you may know, Todd is the CEO of Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers and his company donated a million dollars to Southern last year.

Today, I attended the Louisiana Economic Development Luncheon. Congressman Garret Graves (no relation to Todd) is the Chairman of the DC Mardi this year and he moderated the luncheon. Governor John Bel Edwards and the Louisiana Congressional delegation addressed the attendees. They all spoke of the economic successes and challenges our state is facing. Todd Graves and Sean Reilly (the CEO of Lamar Advertising) interviewed Michael Dubin, CEO of Dollar Shave Club, which served as the keynote address for the luncheon. Jennifer and Sean Reilly's daughter, Anna, is this year's queen. The DC Mardi Gras is a networking bonanza with an abundance of political, business and industry leaders here having a great time, but more importantly working for Louisiana. This is my first time attending the DC Mardi Gras, and I've always found it to be strange that Louisianians would travel all the way to Washington to celebrate Mardi Gras. But now, I get it. This won't be my last trip.

In the meantime, Federation Mardi Gras events kick off in full force this weekend. Chapter President Camille Mayo and the L.A. Chapter will host its Mardi Gras Ball in Los Angeles, and Chapter President Pamela LeBrane and the Houston Chapter will host its 43rd Mardi Gras Scholarship Gala. Our Federation leadership will be spread from the West Coast to the East Coast celebrating the Louisiana tradition. Like the DC Mardi Gras event, our chapter Mardi Gras events are great opportunities for business networking and fundraising for scholarships and other key alumni initiatives.

Finally, I want to once again congratulate the SUBR athletic program on its continued academic success. Last week, we shared here in News & Notes the earlier press release and details of the academic accomplishments of our athletes. As someone mentioned to me, sometimes we don't hear much about the academic successes of our athletes. We should do everything we can to celebrate their prowess, both on and off the court or field.

Go Jags and Happy Mardi Gras!

Preston J. Castille, Jr., Esq.
National President